

SHREVEPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT

FlashPoint

Volume 3 Number 1

To Protect and Preserve Life, Property and the Environment

Summer 2003

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FlashPoint is the official newsletter of the
Shreveport Louisiana Fire Department



FIRE DEPARTMENT WORKS TO ELIMINATE BUDGET SHORTFALL

The Shreveport Fire Department and City Administration worked together recently to reach a needed reduction in the department's operating budget due to lower than expected tax revenue in the first quarter of 2003. Faced with an \$8 million shortfall, the city asked each department to come up with a portion of revenue to eliminate the projected deficit. The fire department total amounted to \$1.6 million. Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran called several emergency meetings with the Administrative Chiefs and the Executive Board of Local #514 to try and develop a strategy in meeting the request. Because \$34 million (92%) of the Fire Department's \$37 million operating budget is related to personnel services, it was evident that in order to reach the requested amount, this account would have to be scrutinized.

After painstakingly going back and forth on the issue of what areas could be cut and not effect service levels to the citizens and not compromise the safety of firefighters, several proposals were submitted to City Administration. Finally a combination of revenue from open positions and an overdue fee increase for ambulance transports was able to bridge the gap. **See FRS , pg. 3**

New Fire Engines Make Debut



■ **These four new, recently delivered fire engines were part of the City and Fire Department's 2001 voter approved Bond Initiative.**

Bright red paint with an adorning, ribbon like, white reflective stripe decorated four new fire engines recently received by the department from Ferrara Fire Apparatus Inc. of Holden, Louisiana. But don't let the good-looks fool you, these trucks have plenty of muscle with a 430 horse-powered Detroit diesel engine, 500 gallon water tank and a pumping capacity at a fire scene of 1250 gallons of water a minute. **See Engines , pg. 3**

Chief's Column

There has been quite a gap between the last newsletter and this issue. Budget cuts claimed our public information officer position. After enjoying significant advantages and gains for having a full-time PIO for the past two years, we are now trying to figure out how we are going to get along without one. Many PIO services have been restructured or eliminated. The newsletter will continue, but will not be produced as frequently.



Kelvin J. Cochran
Fire Chief

This has been an extremely challenging year for the City of Shreveport and the Shreveport Fire Department. The greatest cause for the challenges that have impacted our department is the sluggish local economy and sales tax revenue that has fallen below estimated projections for our FY 2003 operating budget. In spite of the challenges, we still live in a great city and we still have the best job in the world.

The process involved in cutting 1.2 million dollars from our budget is one of the greatest leadership challenges I have faced as fire chief. Through the efforts of the

administrative chiefs, Local 514 and the support of Mayor Keith Hightower, we were not devastated by layoffs and losses of pay and/or benefits. Our strategy at the end of last year of not filling vacant positions in anticipation of financial difficulties this fiscal year proved to be extremely beneficial. The bad news is, we will not be able to fill any of the thirty-seven vacant firefighter positions or the five fire communications officer positions this year. We are currently meeting our minimum staffing guidelines through overtime.

Another impact of tightening our budget is that we will not have the financial means to support a department sponsored Paramedic Training Program. Our goal to have 165 paramedics on the fire line has been temporarily delayed. We are working diligently with Bossier Parish Community College to offer a flexible and accommodating paramedic course with several options for financial aid for our members who are still interested in pursuing paramedic training.

The pension deficit issue has yet to be resolved. At this printing there has been no resolution at the state legislature and the lawsuit filed by the Louisiana Municipal Association has not been resolved. Neither firefighters nor the cities want to be impacted by an increase in contributions. The state does not want to be responsible for the entire amount. If the City of Shreveport has to increase its contributions, it is virtually impossible to do so without further budget cuts to all city departments. The fire department will most likely be impacted by lay-offs and loss of benefits. There is no easy solution to this issue.

As you can see some of our strategic plans have been affected, but there are many others that are well on track for this year. We recently received delivery of and began training for our new EMS electronic field reporting systems. This program will enhance our

quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives on EMS incidents and will improve our billing process and collections. The request for information technology (IT) upgrades has been finalized and approved and the purchasing process is underway. Within the next few months all fire stations and facilities will be up-to-date with computer work stations sufficient for the number of personnel and activities of each fire station and other department facilities.

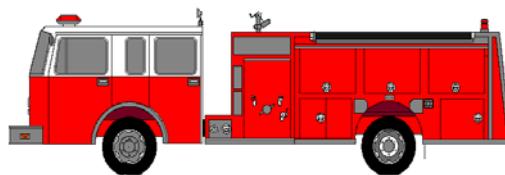
The construction for the new Dallas W. Greene, Jr. Central Fire Station is ahead of schedule. Weekly pictorial updates are now provided on our website to keep track of recent progress. We will break ground on the new Station Thirteen within the next two weeks. Both stations are scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2004. Station renovation projects are ongoing. Renovations to Station Eight and Station Ten are top priority. The process has been slow and frustrating but be assured, we are moving these projects as fast as we are able to. We have purchased and delivered portable storage buildings to six fire stations who were in need of them. The four new pumpers have been delivered and put in service at Stations 8, 9, 15, and 17. Ferrara Manufacturing has been awarded the bid on the new Rescue One. The preconstruction trip to Holden, Louisiana by the Rescue 1 committee will be scheduled soon.

Thanks to the leadership of Assistant Chief Bobby Robinson, we had the most successful "Paint Your Heart Out" campaign ever. Mr. Johnson, the citizen whose house we painted was extremely pleased with the quality of our work. We had a team of twelve members who completed painting the house in approximately two hours. A special thanks goes to Chiefs Mack McCoy, Henry Simons, Brian Crawford, Steve Nezat, Glenn Maywether, Louis Johnson; Training Officers J. P. Lane and Scott Wolverton; Firefighters Chad Burden and Brandon Lee. Scott Wolverton's son Josh helped us as well.

Open House 2003 was a tremendous success. All crews did a great job. Captain Hammond and Captain Davis at Station Eight were busy with more than one-hundred visitors. The citizens really had a good time and have a greater appreciation for their fire department.

Our initiatives toward safety this year have been outstanding. The results speak for themselves. To date, we have had no major injuries to our personnel and no major motor vehicle accidents. There have been no citizen complaints that were not easily resolved. Efforts toward satisfying our customers are obviously contributing to success in this area. Keep up the good work!

It is important for us to remember: there is a direct correlation between how we treat each other and how we treat the public. We must be family in the fire station to treat our citizens like family on emergency calls. If we are a team at the fire station, we will be a team on the scene. To give the citizens our best, we must give our best to each other everyday. Say yes as often as you can. Always do more than they expect you to do. Always be nicer than they expect you to be. _



Firefighters' Retirement System (FRS) Seeking Solution

continued from page 1

Although the budget has been adjusted to reflect the changes that essentially take effect July 1, Fire Department Administration will be closely watching spending and the financial forecast for the remainder of the year.

"Coming up with a financial solution that did not effect the delivery of emergency service to the citizens or compromise our firefighters' safety was our paramount concern in dealing with this issue."

Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran

Another concern facing the finances of the department and firefighters alike is the ongoing situation involving the Firefighters Retirement System (FRS). There is currently legislation to overcome the FRS deficit on the Louisianan House floor, Bill No. 1946, proposed by Representative William Daniel of District 68, that would essentially increase employee, employer, and state contributions by one-third each. Currently employees contribute eight percent and employers contribute nine percent compensation toward the funding of FRS. However the issue is resolved, all parties involved: city, state, and firefighters are looking for a quick and favorable solution. _

New Engines Already In Service

continued from page 1

Other specifications that characterize the new engines are:

- Overall length - 34 ft.
- Weight - 34,890 lbs.
- All extruded aluminum 102" wide body
- Allison HD 4060 transmission
- 50 gallon foam tank
- Internal ground ladder compartment

The new engines are already in service and assigned to Station 8 in Queensborough, Station 9 in Cedar Grove, Station 15 in Sunset Acres, and Station 17 in Southern Hills. Each new engine carries a price tag of \$304,268 with equipment costing an additional \$40,000. The total cost for all four new engines was \$1,377,072 and was paid for with voter approved bond money from the city's 2001 initiative. _

OPEN for BUSINESS

The new home to the Shreveport Fire Department's Fire Investigations Office opened recently at 1700 Snow Street



Shreveport Firefighter/Army Reservist Saves Soldier From Choking

Firefighter Dale Marshall, currently serving with the Army Reserves at Fort Polk, Louisiana, put his medical skills to the test recently when a fellow soldier began choking. The following is an excerpt and photo from the Fort Polk Guardian concerning the incident:

While firefighters are called upon to squelch deadly flames, they often serve as emergency medical technicians. Master Sgt. Dale Marshall, 4013th Garrison Support Unit, U.S. Army Reserve, also a civilian fireman with the Shreveport Fire Department, spends his days at Fort Polk preparing soldiers for deployment, but in early May he had to don his fireman hat to save a soldier's life. "I was finishing my lunch and talking to some friends at the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, when I noticed some people gathering around a soldier at a table nearby. When I went over, I saw three people trying to get the soldier to cough up food by hitting him on the back. One civilian tried to perform the Heimlich Maneuver, but it didn't look forcefully enough," said Marshall.

Although the civilian performed several repetitions, Marshall said the attempts were unsuccessful and the soldier continued to choke and his condition deteriorate. "By the time I got there, I'm not sure if he was getting any air or not. If he was, he wasn't getting much," Marshall explained.

While the civilian's previous attempts had failed, Marshall said he had to continue trying the Heimlich until the soldier coughed up the food or passed out. After two to three thrusts the food passed. Marshall attributed his success to his training as an EMT with the fire department.

Because Shreveport firefighters must also be EMT's, the Heimlich Maneuver is basic life support training for them. "Actually, the majority of calls that the fire department responds to are for emergency medical service," said Marshall. "In Shreveport, we respond to all types of medical emergencies, from heart attacks to gunshots. This is the first time I have had to help a choking victim."

Although a little shaken up, the soldier, who wishes to remain anonymous, said he was happy to have Marshall there. Marshall said he was happy to help the soldier. "I'm just glad I was able to help someone when they needed it," he said. _ *Editors note: For his life saving actions, Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran issued Marshall a Letter of Commendation presented by his base commander on June 12, 2003.*



Shreveport firefighter and Army Reservist Msgt. Dale Marshall demonstrates Heimlich Maneuver.

2003 OPEN HOUSE

SHREVEPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT

On June 7 and 8, the Shreveport Fire Department opened its doors and invited the public to their fourth annual OPEN HOUSE event. Bright skies and mild temperatures set the tone for the Health Screen and Children's Day on Saturday. Large crowds turned up at Fire Stations 4, 8, and 9 to have their blood pressures, glucose and cholesterol checked, and body fat analysis performed. Once again this year, Willis Knighton Health Systems partnered with the department to provide registered nurses and dieticians for free counseling on topics such as heart disease, smoking cessation, hypertension, and a healthy diet.

At the Fair Grounds, the station was overrun early with eager toddlers, preschoolers, and anxious parents as they were entertained by the clowns from EMS, the Children's Safe Smokehouse, Shots for Tots (ok, maybe not so entertained by this one), and refreshments. The Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office also was on-hand with Kid-Print, the national child finger printing program. Station 9, where the main Health Screen was available, had a large crowd early that did not let up well into the afternoon. All stations reported brisk business all weekend and the overall attendance figures surpassed last year's totals, making this year's event the most successful to date. _



Fire Department Members Making Waves with National Media

Lately it seem that you can't turn on your television or read a magazine without finding someone from the Shreveport Fire Department turning up. Here are just a few examples:

Firefighter Shea Deeds was made over on "Live with Regis and Kelly" earlier this year. The popular talk show had Deeds in her firefighter gear, soot and all, and then had a specialist make her over. Deeds was also featured and on the cover of local *SB Magazine*. The story line was about single professionals in the area.



Firefighter Shea Deeds appearing with Regis and Kelly in New York.

Earlier this year, Fire Communications Officer II Violet Anderson was flown to Chicago for a filming of the nationally syndicated Jenny Jones talk show. The segment, which aired in March, featured 911 emergency incidents where communications officers were instrumental in the positive outcome. The incident involving Anderson occurred in May of 2002. She provided emergency medical instructions and calmed a frantic family member following a toddler's near drowning in a bathtub. The child made a full recovery.

Kip Mourad, and the "Crew of Rescue 1 (Captain John Davis and firefighters Jason Jordan and Edward Carey)" were featured in the "Heroism and Community Service Awards" article in the April edition of the fire services' largest publication, *Firehouse* magazine. (*See Awards, page 6*)

Assistant to the Fire Chief Brian Crawford was published in the March edition of *Firehouse* magazine. The article concerned events surrounding media coverage of an actual fire department incident where a reporter was acting on misinformation. Additionally, Crawford has feature articles on performance evaluations and diversity in hiring that will appear in the July issues of *Fire Engineering* magazine and August's *Fire Chief* magazine respectively.

Fire Driver Barbara Sellers was recently featured in the February/March issue of *Light & Tasty*, a national food magazine. Sellers "Quick Picante Sauce" recipe was published listing the following ingredients: *1 can (14 ½ ounces) whole tomatoes, drained; ½ cup coarsely chopped onions, ½ cup minced fresh cilantro or parsley; 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and halved; 3 tablespoons of lime juice; 1 tablespoon chili powder; 1 garlic clove, halved; ½ teaspoon salt; 1/4 teaspoon grated lime peel; and 5 drops hot pepper sauce.* In a blender, combine the first 10 ingredients; cover and process until smooth. Serve with tortilla chips.

Later this year (September or October) Chief of Communications Willis Carter will have a feature article published by *The Journal of Public Safety Communications*. This will be the followup to an article Carter published in the magazine's September 2002 edition concerning the implementation of a training shift in Communications. _

New Central Fire Station Construction Updates Now Available On-Line

- Construction ahead of schedule on department's largest capital project ever

Citizens can now follow the construction progress of the new \$4.5 million Central Fire Station, the largest capital project currently underway by the city and the largest in fire department history, on-line at www.shreveportfire.org. Just go to the web site and click on the icon picturing the new station that appears on the left side of the home page.

Ground breaking for the new station occurred this past March and since that time the land has been cleared, the parking lot and foundations poured, and just this week, the steel beams have started going up. Thanks to a milder than expected Spring, the project is ahead of schedule and the completion date has been moved up from March 1 to January 1, 2004.

The new station, which will also house the administrative offices of the department will be some 32,000 square feet and located at 263 North Common. It will replace the current station at Common and Crockett Street. _



New Central Fire Station construction site in June

Aviation Task Force Scores High Marks in Latest FAA Evaluation and Live Fire Training

Earlier this year, the Shreveport Aviation Task Force completed their annual FAA inspection given this year by Mr. Ron Hess, FAA Inspector for the Southwest Region. The inspection included extensive oral questioning, a computer-based airport familiarization test, and performance evaluation. This was followed by a complete records inspection, vehicle inspection, and overall program review. All members and the program passed without any deficiencies.

On May 14, 19, and 20, the Aviation Task Force successfully completed their FAA mandated "Live Fire Training." The "Burn" as it is known by ARFF fire fighters, was held at Barksdale Air Force Base. All participants of the exercise, designed to give firefighters hands-on situations and promote teamwork, performed excellently and far exceeded the federal requirement.

The Shreveport Fire Department would like to thank and commend the Barksdale AFB Fire Department and the United States Air Force, for their cooperation and hospitality in helping the Aviation Task Force complete their job requirements. _

FRONT LINE HEADLINES

The following SFD news items are excerpts from press releases issued by Fire Department Administration and can be viewed in their entirety on the Department's web page: www.shreveportfire.org

Fire Destroys Shreveport Landmark

May 31 - When the first calls came into 911 reporting a fire on Cross Lake at 12:11 a.m., a cell phone caller said they could see something burning on the other side of the lake, several miles away. When the first crew of firefighters arrived just minutes later, they faced an inferno that was the sprawling complex of the Progressive Men's Club, 1600 Dilg League



A firefighter maneuvers a water deck gun during a fire at the Progressive Men's Club in May

Drive. Fire officials were quick to request additional resources to battle the fire and at 12:30 a.m., a second alarm was activated.

As the fire raced to consume the mostly wooden, multistoried structure, more than a dozen pieces of equipment and over 30 firefighters were used to fight the intense blaze. At 1:25 a.m., after more than an hour, the blaze was listed as under control by Incident Commander Paul Waldon. Fire Investigators believe the origin of the fire was somewhere around the kitchen. The club is over 50 years old and a Shreveport landmark playing host to numerous high school parties and dances as well as weddings and reception.

Jet Skier Injured After Crash Into Concrete Pylon

May 30 - Along with firefighters, two Barksdale airmen and the owner of a local fish market came to the aid of a victim of a jet ski accident Wednesday night on Shreveport's Cross Bayou. Airman Jerry Woodard and Sgt. John Kostelnik were fishing on the water way near downtown when a man crashed his jet ski into a concrete pillar used to secure a pipe line that crossed the bayou.

Both servicemen rushed to the aid of the man. Woodard jumped into the water while Kostelnik called 911 and had to run to a nearby water treatment plant to guide firefighters to the incident. Dusty Dupont, of Dupont's Fish Market, provided and took firefighters and paramedics in his boat

up the bayou until they came across the accident. Firefighters spent more than 20 minutes in the water securing the injured man, who was then taken to shore and lifted out using a specially designed rescue basket. **(Awards for this rescue on page 7)**

Two-Alarm Apartment Fire Causes Damage and Evacuation

April 25 - A fire that started from grease being left on the stove damaged two residences and forced a partial evacuation of the Park

Place Apartments early this morning. Shreveport firefighters were called to the Queensborough neighborhood complex, mostly made up of retired senior citizens, at 4:36 a.m. When they arrived in the 3200 block of Mertis Avenue smoke could be seen coming from a second floor apartment.

A second alarm was sounded at 4:50 a.m. to provide additional manpower to the scene, primarily for life safety issues that involved the evacuation of adjacent apartments. Aggressive firefighters were able to quickly confine the fire which was officially listed as being under control at 5:19 a.m. _

Shreveport Fire Communications Undergoes National Accreditation Process

A team of assessors from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) visited the Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division from April 5, 2003 through April 9, 2003. The team was composed of law enforcement and fire/rescue practitioners from similar, but out-of-state agencies. They examined all aspects of the Fire Communications Division policy, procedures, management, operations, and support services by reviewing written materials, conducting interviews, and visiting offices and other places where compliance could be witnessed and verified.

The Shreveport Fire Department Communications Division must comply with 199 out of 214 standards in order to gain accredited status. According to Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, "Accreditation is an award that represents professionalism and excellence. Our Fire Communications Officers can take pride in knowing that they represent the very best in Public Safety Communications." Cochran also praised the hard work of Chief of Communications Willis Carter and Asst. Chief of Communications Tonette Lee to prepare the division for near-certain accreditation later this Summer. _

Spouse Support Group Meeting

The Shreveport Fire Department Spouse Support Group will not hold its monthly meeting in July but will instead participate in the following department sponsored activity:

- Critical Incident Stress Management Course
- Date: July 19-20
- Time: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Place: Shreveport Fire Academy, 6440 Greenwood Road

All Fire Department members and their spouses are invited and encouraged to attend. If you would like to RSVP or need more information concerning the course, contact Patti at 686-0012. For more information about the Spouse Support Group, contact Joy Duke at 688-7456. The Spouse Support Group meets every first Monday of the month at various locations from 6:30-8:00 p.m. _

ON SCENE



Firefighters used the Jaws of Life to free this Shreveport motorist who sustained serious injuries after his vehicle left Interstate 220 and struck a concrete pylon head-on. He was airlifted by Life Air Rescue to LSU Health Science Center.

Promotions & Appointments

To Deputy Fire Chief
Mack McCoy, April 1

To Assistant Fire Chief
Robert "Bobby" Robinson,
April 1

To District Chief
Danny Richardson, April 1

To EMS Officer
Kevin Moore, April 9

To FCOH
Marlo Francis

Retirements

Deputy Fire Chief Coy
Chapel, 35 years of service,
April 1

AWARDS, HONORS AND COMMENDATIONS

] June 2 - Firefighters **Ward Fields, Richard Scales, Billy Lewis, Carlos Steward, Johnathan Mayo, Robert Taggart**, Captains **Randy Barron, Mike Mackey, and Mark Connella**, received *Letters of Commendation* and Barksdale Airmen **Jerry Woodard and John**

Kostelnik, and Dusty Dupont of Dupont's Fish Market received *Civilian Letters of Commendation* for their actions in the May 28 rescue of a victim following a jet ski accident on Cross Bayou. (See story, pg. 6)

] May 30 - **Rolanda Knight** received the *Civilian*

Letter of Commendation for her actions in assisting a motorist suffering a medial emergency in rush-hour traffic on May 28 at Bert Kouns and Dean Road.

] May 27 - Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention **Terry Lewis**, Inspector **Chris Robinson**, Captain **Mike Lawson** and Firefighters **Richard Lane, Michael Fredieu, Floyd Seamster, and Jevonnie Rutledge** were recognized with *Letters of Commendation* for their lifesaving effort last month at a Wal-Mart where a customer suffered a cardiac arrest. Two customers, Barksdale Airmen **Sgt. Derrick Williamson, and Jackie Fisher**, a registered nurse with Willis Knighton started CPR and were recognized with *Civilian Letter of Commendation*.

] May 27 - **Kyla Morris** was recognized with a *Civilian Letter of Commendation* for fighting off a fire at her home in the 3000 block of Desoto earlier this month. Morris was seven months pregnant at the time.

] May 27 - Firefighters **Jimmy Hill and Chad Alexander** received *Letters of Commendation* for their compassionate treatment of a female who was suffering a potentially embarrassing medical emergency at an outside event last month.

] May 27 - **Mandy Cash**, 14 year old eighth grader at Caddo Middle Magnet and daughter of Chief's Aide, Captain Gary Cash received a *Civilian Letter of Commendation* for her recent second place finish in the State Social Studies Fair in Baton Rouge. Her subject: the Shreveport Fire Department. Cash won twice at the local level before competing in the state competition.

] May 27 - Captain **Tommy Carpenter**, Firefighters **Reginald Taylor, Markous Vinson, Daniel Turner, George Alamond, and Richard Morrow** received *Letters of Commendations* for their excellent care of a patient suffering a medical emergency in his South Highlands residence.

] April 21 - Captain **Kip Mourad** was listed nationally among *Firehouse Magazine's Heroism Award* winners for 2002 for his leadership and rescue of a Shreveport resident from a completely involved house fire last year. Additionally, Mourad and the entire crew of Rescue 1 - C-shift: Firefighters **Edward Carey, Jason Jordan**, (and now Captain) **John Davis**, received a *Firehouse's Crew Citation Heroism Award* for that same rescue.

] March 7 - **Lena Stephens**, 70, was awarded the *Civilian Letter of Commendation* for her life saving actions in pulling 78 year old Leslie Lee to safety during a house fire.

] February 12 - Captain **Mike Mackey** and Firefighters **Craig Bynog, Richard Scales, Garrett Matthews, Charlie Parker, Damon Johnson** and Fire Communications Office **Tony Johns** received *Letters of Commendation* for their actions in providing instructions, treating and transporting a patient who suffered a cardiac arrest. Also recognized with a *Civilian Letters of Commendation* was Henry Wright, son of the patient, for assisting during the incident. _

Congratulations!

From the Editor's Desk

What Do Firefighters Do With All That Time? . . .What Time

by **Brian A. Crawford**

This editorial is in light of some recently overheard remarks questioning what firefighters did with their time when not responding to an emergency, which for the record happened 32,361 times last year.

Let's first start with some background. Becoming a Shreveport firefighter requires: passing a Civil Service exam and surviving the grueling employment process that involves interviews and cognitive and physical testing for competency. Once hired, recruits are put through a 16-week basic training course that includes more than 600 hours of classroom and outside practical training in fire science, hazardous materials, emergency medicine, incident management systems, laws, regulations and policies, building construction, mechanical rescue procedures, public education, and more.

As recruits leave the academy and become full fledged firefighters, their days at the station and away from their families for 24-hours at a time are filled with a multitude and variety of tasks, none more important than responding to

an emergency incident. Last year's incident total was a 500% increase over the 6,469 incidents recorded in 1979. This increased incident volume coupled with larger response coverage areas often have fire and medic companies away from their stations for extended periods of time.

At the emergency scene, Shreveport firefighters are highly educated and trained to multi-task providing fire suppression, advanced medical care, including transportation to the hospital, heavy rescue operations, hazardous material containment, bomb and ordinance disposal, and performing underwater and high angle rescue if necessary, just to name a few. When the incident is over, firefighters return to the station to fill out necessary paperwork, restock equipment, cleanup and prepare for the next emergency.

Each day as they arrive at work, firefighters must check each truck and every piece of equipment for working order. They must also study geographical maps of their response area and know every street and accompanying water supply. They review new documents and changes to policies and procedures.

Then there are the housekeeping measures that must be addressed for a place where over the next 24-hours, firefighters will work, sleep, eat, and shower. There are groceries to buy (with their own money), meals to prepare, floors to sweep, and bathrooms to clean. Additionally, each day of the week is obligated

with an additional station chore, such as waxing the floors, maintaining the yard, etc.

Each Shreveport firefighter will spend a minimum 30 hours per month participating in a station school and/or outside drill. Additionally they are required to attend formal management and leadership courses, as well as medical and hazardous material refresher classes annually at the fire academy. These classes can last anywhere from several hours to two-weeks.

A large number of firefighters, 150 and counting, have chosen to enter the department's paramedic program. This is another 500 hours of college level instruction that along with the didactic classroom, includes hospital clinical rotations and an ambulance internship. Additionally, most young firefighters spend at least one night a week in a college classroom. Beginning in 2010, Shreveport firefighters must possess an associate degree in order to be eligible to test for an officer rank.

In closing, let me say that I have only touched briefly on what a firefighter does with his/her day but in no way have mentioned all that they do. There are community service events, educational seminars and school visits, blood pressure checks, public service calls to assisting the elderly or invalid, water vacuum for flooded homes and businesses, and the list goes on and on. What do firefighters do with all of their time when not responding to an emergency? . . .What time —

FlashPoint

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Fire Department

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FlashPoint welcomes your questions and/or comments. For more information about the Shreveport Fire Department call 318/ 673-6652 or e-mail brian.crawford@ci.shreveport.la.us

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